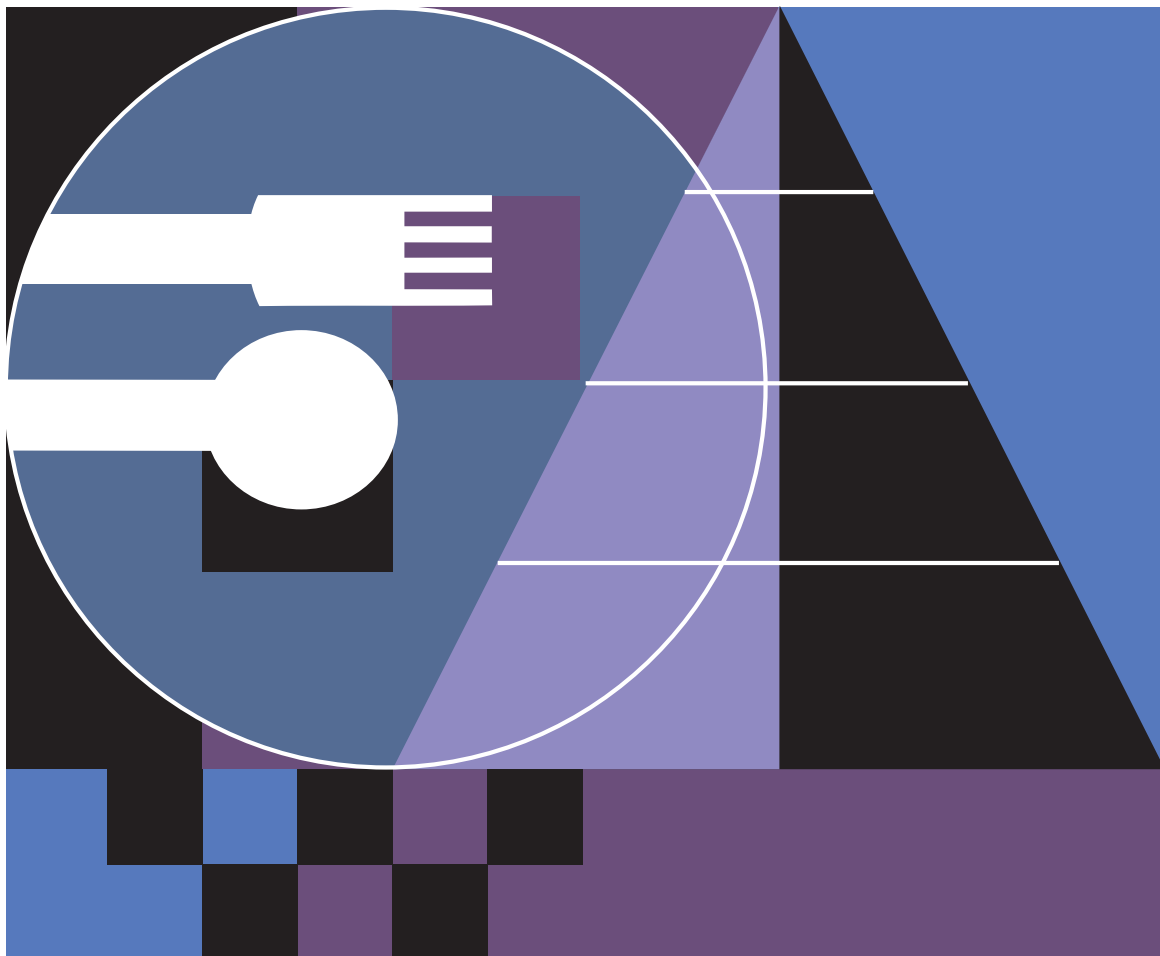


Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program

Competitive Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program: Description and Application Process



United States Department of Agriculture
Economic Research Service
Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program
Competitive Grants and Cooperative Research Program Description
& Application Process

Overview	4
Authority	4
Applicable Regulations	4
Research Categories	5
Research Priorities	5
<i>Dietary and Nutrition Outcomes</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Food Program Targeting and Delivery</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Program Forecasting and Budget Analysis</i>	<i>7</i>
Project Types and Eligibility Requirements	8
Peer Review of Applications	8
Evaluation Factors	9
How To Obtain Application Materials	10
Application Process	10
<i>Overview</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Submission Requirements</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Format and Contents of Proposals</i>	<i>11</i>
<u>Application for Funding Cover Page</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Table of Contents</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Project Summary</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Project Description</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>References to Project Description</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Collaborative Arrangements</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Vitae and Publication List(s)</u>	<u>14</u>
<i>Curriculum Vitae (CV).</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Publication List(s).</i>	<i>14</i>
<u>Budget</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>Current and Pending Support</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Additions to Project Description</u>	<u>16</u>

<i>What/Where To Submit</i>	16
Proposal Disposition	17
Duration of Awards	17
<i>Management Information</i>	17
<i>Notice of Award</i>	17
<i>Financial Obligations</i>	17
Post-Award Administration	18
<i>Release of Information</i>	18
Checklist	19
ERS Deadline Dates	20

**United States Department of Agriculture
Economic Research Service
Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program
Competitive Grants and Cooperative Research Program Description &
Application Process**

Overview

Applications are invited for competitive grant and cooperative agreement awards in the United States Department of Agriculture for fiscal year 1998. The intent of this document is to provide background on the research areas of interest to the Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program (FANRP), application procedure, deadline for submission, and guidance for the application process.

Economic Research Service will accept proposals under this program for funding levels between \$50,000 and \$500,000. For interested parties seeking small grants, see the ERS home page on the Internet at WWW.ECON.AG.GOV.

Authority

The authority for this program is contained in the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1998 (P.L. 105-86). Under this program, subject to the availability of funds, the Secretary may award competitive research grants and cooperative agreements, for periods not to exceed 5 years, for the support of research projects to further the programs, especially the Food Stamp Program (FSP), Child Nutrition Programs (School Breakfast, National School Lunch, Summer Feeding, and Adult/Child Care Feeding), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Proposals may be submitted by any State agricultural experiment station, college, university, other research institution or organization, Federal agency, private organization, corporation, or individual.

Applicable Regulations

Regulations applicable to this program (as specified in those regulations) include the following: (a) procedures to be followed when submitting grant proposals and cooperative agreements and rules governing the evaluation of proposals; (b) the USDA Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations, 7 CFR 3019; (c) the USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, 7 CFR Part 3015; and (d) the USDA Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, 7 CFR Part 3016.

Research Categories

ERS is accepting proposals for support of high-priority research important to USDA's food assistance and nutrition programs in three Research Categories. Anticipated funding in FY 1998 for competitive grants and cooperative agreements will be between \$2 and \$4 million. The following areas outline the research for the entire food assistance and nutrition program:

- Dietary and Nutrition Outcomes
 - ▶ Access to and choice of healthful diets
 - ▶ Nutrition and health
 - ▶ Diet quality
 - ▶ Nutrition education evaluation
- Food Program Targeting and Delivery
 - ▶ Success at servicing needy, at-risk populations
 - ▶ Program gaps and overlays
 - ▶ Urban-rural delivery
 - ▶ Waste, fraud, and abuse
- Program Forecasting and Budget Analysis
 - ▶ Economic growth, recession, inflation
 - ▶ Program interactions
 - ▶ Projections of budgetary needs
 - ▶ Programs and local economic conditions

Research Priorities

Within our broad research categories listed above, ERS' competitive grants and cooperative agreements program is giving priority to research which addresses the following (proposals may address one or more of these issues, but must specify one of the three major research categories):

I. Dietary and Nutrition Outcomes

Three research topics need to be addressed in this area:

- A. Development of a practical dietary assessment tool to be used with children ages 2-4 years and who may be eligible to participate in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). WIC provides specific supplemental foods, nutrition education, and social service and health care referrals to low-income pregnant, breast-feeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children up to age 5 years who are at nutrition risk. Dietary assessments are routinely carried out under the WIC program as a basis for nutrition assessment, regardless of whether or not the assessments are used to certify an individual. These assessments provide a tool for individualizing

nutrition education, and sometimes the food package itself and health care referrals.

To the extent possible, the tool should serve multiple functions, such as screening for dietary patterns or behaviors that place children at increased nutritional and health risk; individualizing nutrition education; and individualizing the food package as well as referral to other food assistance programs. The tool should also be easy to use and interpret, and easily adapted, for use in culturally diverse populations. Although few dietary assessment tools appropriate for use with WIC children currently exist, there has been a considerable amount of work done in this area. Research should therefore include a review of the dietary assessment tools currently in use or being developed by different WIC programs to determine whether they could be easily modified for use with children.

- B.** Development of methodology and validation of instruments to support evaluation of food stamp nutrition education activities. The Food Stamp Program (FSP), through optional nutritional education state plans, encourages states to provide information that focuses on one or more of several core components: diet quality, food shopping behavior, food safety, and food security. Development and validation of the methods and instruments for assessing food-related changes resulting from these nutrition education interventions are needed. Methods and instruments are needed which minimize respondent burden, are inexpensive and easy to administer, and are appropriate for low-literacy and/or low-income populations. It is recognized that identifying and measuring intermediate variables, in addition to behavioral outcomes, can be critical to measuring progress of an intervention. The areas of special interest include antecedent and intermediate predictors of behavior change (e.g., stages of change variables, knowledge, awareness, self-efficacy, intention to change); validating self-reported change; using selected foods as proxies for change; innovative uses of modern technology to assess changes in household food use, food acquisition patterns, and individual food intake; food shopping/food resource management behavior; food safety-related behavioral indicators; and use of self-reported shelf inventory to assess food purchase behavior.
- C.** Examining the causes of food insecurity, the role of Federal food assistance programs in providing food security, and the impact that the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 is having on food security.

II. Food Program Targeting and Delivery

A primary objective of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 is to move individuals off welfare and into the labor force. However, as households enter the labor market, the additional earned income is partially offset by a reduction in program payments. Also, under PRWORA of 1996, states may disperse the block grant funds as cash assistance and/or as in-kind transfers. The level and mix of earned income and assistance benefits (cash and in-kind) directly affect the eligibility for and level of food stamp benefits. In the context of welfare reform and its impact on the need and demand for food assistance, several

areas of research are of particular interest:

- A. Examination of the characteristics of the welfare assistance packages being developed at the state level and assessment of their impact on household behavior -- consumption, labor supply, program participation, and the need and demand for food assistance.
- B. Examination of the characteristics of food assistance recipients after welfare reform, with a particular focus on any change in participation among the working poor.
- C. While considerable research has been done on food assistance programs, food and commodity markets, and labor markets, little work has been done to integrate this research and examine the linkages among food assistance programs, participant behavior, commodity and labor markets, rural areas, and the economy at large. ERS is looking for research dealing with the behavior of low-income households to improve their economywide model. Of particular interest are model developments for low-income household food demand, labor supply, and program participation decisions.

III. Program Forecasting and Budget Analysis.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 instigated a new era of fiscal federalism in the administration of welfare assistance. The replacement of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with block grants to states for the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program may have a profound influence on the Food Stamp Program (FSP). Five research topics need to be addressed in this area:

- A. Examination of the characteristics of the welfare assistance packages being developed at the state level and assessment of the impact they may have on Federal food assistance program participation rates and expenditures. ERS' interests include, but are not confined to, the use of state administrative data and the development of operational models for assessing the impact of a state's system of welfare programs on Federal food assistance programs. For example, states may substitute in-kind benefits for cash payments, which may affect food stamp benefits.
- B. Linkage of an operational microsimulation model to an economywide model for analysis of the FSP and its relation to other welfare programs and the economy in general. ERS' interest is to link the results of a policy change from a microsimulation model with the economywide model of the United States used at the ERS.
- C. Development of a theoretical model for the optimal design of a state system of welfare programs, incorporating the objectives, incentives and constraints of state-level welfare planners. The model would be used for assessing the role of the Federal food assistance programs in context of a state welfare system.

- D. Examination of the post-TANF relationship between national and state level macroeconomic conditions and the FSP am participation and benefit levels. Past work on the impact of macroeconomic conditions on the FSP have generally used national macroeconomic data. However, recent research suggests that state data give a more precise estimate of the effect of economic conditions. The devolution of control over welfare to the states further emphasizes the need for this approach.
- E. Examination of the role of the FSP as a macroeconomic stabilization mechanism. One area of interest concerns the responsiveness of welfare programs to macroeconomic conditions. Prior to welfare reform, AFDC expanded automatically in response to economic downturns as with the FSP. Under PRWORA, the FSP is currently the only major welfare program which automatically adjusts to changing economic conditions.

Project Types and Eligibility Requirements

Proposals may be written so as not to specify the type of award. FANRP staff will determine the type of award. The types of awards are as follows:

- **Competitive Research Grants:** Competitive grants will be supported when the research topic does not require substantial involvement between ERS staff and the recipient during the performance of the award; or
- **Cooperative Agreements:** Cooperative agreements will be supported when the research topic requires substantial involvement between ERS and the investigators.

Proposals may be submitted by any state agricultural experiment station, college, university, other research institution or organization, Federal agency, private organization, corporation or individual. Proposals submitted by non-United States organizations will not be considered for support. The research proposed must be specifically designed for the research program areas described previously.

Peer Review of Applications

All grant and cooperative agreement proposals will be acknowledged. If acknowledgment is not received within 30 days of the submission deadline, please contact the FANRP business office at (202) 694-5405. Prior to technical examination, a preliminary review will be made for responsiveness to the Program Description (for example, relationship of the proposal to the announced program and proposed requirements).

Proposals that do not fall within the guidelines as stated in this document will be eliminated from program competition, and the applicant will be notified in writing. A summary of peer review recommendations will be provided.

Peer review panels will be convened to review proposals in each research area. Notification of disposition of proposals will be made by October 31, 1998 in writing.

Peer review panel members will be selected based upon their training and experience in relevant research or technical fields, taking into account the following factors:

- The level of formal social science or technical education and other relevant experience of the individual as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research and other relevant activities;
- The need to include as peer reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant social science or technical fields;
- The need to include as peer reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (for example, universities, industry, private consultant(s), and geographic locations); and

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or potential conflicts of interest that may have an impact on review or evaluation. Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as proposal content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential among ERS staff members and peer reviewers.

Evaluation Factors

The following evaluation factors will be used in reviewing proposals for competitive grants and cooperative agreements:

- Research merit of the proposal, consisting of:
 - ▶ Conceptual adequacy of hypothesis or research question;
 - ▶ Clarity and delineation of objectives;
 - ▶ Adequacy of the description of the undertaking and suitability and feasibility of methodology;
 - ▶ Demonstration of feasibility through preliminary data;
 - ▶ Probability of success of project;
 - ▶ Novelty, uniqueness, and originality; and
 - ▶ Policy program relevance.
- Qualifications of proposed project personnel and adequacy of facilities.
 - ▶ Training and demonstrated awareness of previous and alternative approaches to the problem identified in the proposal, and performance record and/or potential for future accomplishments;
 - ▶ Time allocated for systematic attainment of objectives;
 - ▶ Institutional experience and competence in subject area; and
 - ▶ Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel, facilities, and

instrumentation.

How To Obtain Application Materials

Please note that this document, with a downloadable budget form, is available on the ERS website at **www.econ.ag.gov**. Photocopies of materials and forms are acceptable. Paper copies may also be requested from:

FANRP/ERS
1800 M Street, NW, Room 2141
Washington DC 20036-5831
Telephone: (202) 694-5405
Fax: (202) 694-5661
E-mail: foodsec1@econ.ag.gov

Application Process

Overview

These guidelines are provided to assist you in preparing a proposal to the Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program Competitive Grant and Cooperative Agreement Program. Please read these guidelines carefully before preparing your submission.

The necessary information for completing a proposal is included in the back of this document and may be duplicated.

Submission Requirements

The purpose of a grant or cooperative agreement proposal is to persuade the FANRP and members of the food assistance and nutrition research community who provide advice to the FANRP that the proposed project is important, methodologically sound, and worthy of support under the criteria listed on page 5. Therefore, the proposal must be submitted in response to one of the announced high-priority program areas. The application should be self-contained, should clearly present the merits of the proposed project, and should be written with care and thoroughness. It is important that all essential information for comprehensive evaluation be included. Omissions often result in processing delays and may jeopardize funding opportunities.

In preparing the proposal, applicants are urged to ensure that the name of the principal investigator and, where applicable, the name of the submitting institution are typed at the top of each page. This will permit easy identification in the event that the application becomes disassembled during the review process.

Format and Contents of Proposal

Application for Funding Cover Page

Each copy of the proposal must contain an Application for Funding Cover Page, which must be assembled as the first page of the application. At least one copy of this information must contain pen-and-ink signatures as outlined below. In completing this information, please note the following:

- **Title of Proposal.** The title of the proposal must be brief (80-character maximum), yet represent the major thrust of the project. Because this title will be used to provide information to those who may not be familiar with the proposed project, highly technical words or phraseology should be avoided where possible. In addition, phrases such as "investigation of" or "research on" should not be used.
- **Program to Which You Are Applying.** "FANRP"
- **Research Area.** Choose the research area that is most appropriate to the project being proposed (i.e., Dietary and Nutrition Outcomes, Food Program Targeting and Delivery, or Program Forecasting and Budget Analysis). It is important that only one research area be selected. In instances where the appropriateness of the chosen research area may be in question, the final program area assignment will be made by the FANRP staff. The principal investigator will be informed of any changes in assigned research area.
- **Principal Investigator(s)/Project Director(s).** List the name(s) of the proposing principal investigator(s). If there is more than one investigator, all must be listed and all must sign the Application for Funding Cover Page. Co-principal investigators should be limited to those required for major research collaboration; minor collaborators or consultants are more appropriately designated as collaborators (see page 8). Only the principal investigators listed will receive direct correspondence from the FANRP.
- **Telephone Numbers.** Please list the telephone fax numbers and the E-mail address (if available) of the principal investigator(s) in this block. In addition, please include a telephone number where a message can be left, if different than above.
- **Signatures.** Sign and date the Application for Funding Cover Page. All proposals must be signed by the proposing principal investigator(s) and, for those proposals being submitted through institutions or organizations, endorsed by the authorized organizational representative who possesses the necessary authority to commit the applicant's time and other relevant resources. Investigators who do not sign the Application for Funding Cover Page will not be listed on the grant or cooperative agreement award document in the event that an award is made. Proposals that do not contain the signature of the authorized organizational representative cannot be considered for support.

Table of Contents

A Table of Contents, itself unpaginated, should be placed immediately after the Application for Funding Cover Page. This table should direct the reader to the pages for all sections of the proposal, beginning with the Project Description on page 1.

Project Summary

The proposal must contain a Project Summary, and must be assembled as the third page of the proposal (immediately after the Table of Contents) and should not be numbered. The names and institutions of all principal and co-investigators should be listed on this form (if space is insufficient, please enter "see attached" in this space and provide this information on a separate sheet immediately following the Project Summary form in the proposal). The project summary should not exceed 250 words. The summary is not intended for the general reader; consequently, it may contain technical language comprehensible by persons in disciplines relating to the food and agricultural sciences. The project summary should be a self-contained, specific description of the activity to be undertaken and should focus on:

- Overall project goal(s) and supporting objectives; and
- Plans to accomplish project goal(s).

The importance of a concise, informative project summary cannot be overemphasized.

Project Description

The written text may not exceed 15 single- or double-spaced pages of written text and may not exceed a total of 20 pages including figures and tables. The proposal should be assembled so that the Project Description immediately follows the Project Summary form. To clarify page limitation requirements, page numbering for the Project Description should start with 1, and should be placed on the bottom of the page. Figures and tables are not included in the 15-page limitation. All proposals are to be submitted on standard 8-1/2" x 11" paper. In addition, margins must be at least 1", type size must be 12 point (equivalent to this size for some printers is 10 pitch or 10 characters per inch, which is also acceptable), there should be no more than 6 lines per inch, and there should be no page reductions. The project description must contain the following components:

- **Introduction.** A clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives or research questions of the proposed project should be included. The most significant published work in the field under consideration, including the work of key project personnel on the current application, should be reviewed. The current status of research in this field should also be described.
- **Preliminary Data.** Data pertinent to the proposed research should be included in a separate section. All data collection activities, data sources, including that of key personnel, should be referenced.

- **Rationale and Significance.** Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed research. The objectives' specific relationship to the potential long-term improvement in the efficiency of the USDA's food assistance and nutrition programs should be shown clearly. These purposes are described under Research Priorities on page 2. Any novel ideas or contributions that the proposed project offers should also be discussed in this section.
- **Research Methods.** The hypotheses or questions being asked and the methodology being applied to the proposed project should be stated explicitly. Specifically, this section must include:
 - ▶ A description of the research proposed in the sequence in which it is proposed and to be performed;
 - ▶ Techniques to be used in carrying out the proposed project, including the feasibility of the techniques;
 - ▶ Results expected;
 - ▶ Means by which data will be analyzed or interpreted;
 - ▶ Means of applying results or accomplishing technology transfer, where appropriate;
 - ▶ Pitfalls that may be encountered;
 - ▶ Limitations to proposed procedures; and
 - ▶ A tentative schedule for conducting major steps involved in these investigations and/or experiments.

In describing the research plan, the applicant must explain fully any materials, procedures, situations, or activities that may be hazardous to personnel (whether or not they are directly related to a particular phase of the proposed project), along with an outline or precautions to be exercised to avoid or mitigate the effects of such hazards.

Note: The sections detailed below are not included in the page limitations for the Project Description section.

References to Project Description

All references cited should be complete, including titles and all co-authors, and should conform to an accepted journal format.

Collaborative Arrangements

If the nature of the proposed project requires collaboration or subcontractual arrangements with other research scientists, corporations, organizations, agencies, or entities, the applicant must identify the collaborator(s) and provide a full explanation of the nature of the collaboration. Evidence (that is, letters of intent) should be provided to assure peer reviewers that the collaborators involved have agreed to render this service.

When a project requests funds for multiple institutions, a lead institution must be designated.

Only one proposal may be submitted for the project and only from the lead institution. Other institutions may be designated as subcontractors. Proposals with Application for Funding Cover Pages from more than one institution are not permitted and will be returned without review. Identical proposals submitted by different investigators from different institutions are also not permitted and will be returned without review.

Vitae and Publication List(s)

To assist peer reviewers in assessing the competence and experience of the proposed project staff, all personnel who will be involved in the proposed project must be identified clearly. For each principal investigator listed on the Application for Funding Cover Page, for all collaborators and other senior personnel who expect to work on the project in a significant fashion (for instance, expectation of co-authorships on ensuing publications), whether or not funds are sought for their support, and all subcontractors, the following should be included:

Curriculum Vitae (CV). The curriculum vitae should be limited to a presentation of academic and research credentials, such as, educational, employment, and professional history, honors, and awards. The vitae shall be no more than two pages each in length, excluding publications listings;

Publication List(s). A chronological list of all publications in refereed journals during the past 5 years, including those in press, must be provided for each professional project member for whom a curriculum vitae is provided. Also list only those nonrefereed technical publications relevant to the proposed project. All authors should be listed in the same order as they appear on each paper cited, along with the title and complete references as these usually appear in journals.

Budget (Form ARS-455)

A summary budget is required detailing requested support for the overall project period, which is not to exceed 5 years.

Funds may be requested under any of the budget categories listed, provided that the item or service requested is identified as necessary for successful conduct of the proposed project, allowable under applicable Federal cost principles, and not prohibited under any applicable Federal statute or regulation.

Budget items include:

- ▶ All thesis or postdoctoral advisees/advisors within the past 4 years
- ▶ Salaries and wages
- ▶ Nonexpendable equipment
- ▶ Materials and supplies
- ▶ Domestic travel
- ▶ Publication costs/page charges
- ▶ Computer costs
- ▶ Other direct costs

- ▶ Indirect costs
- ▶ Cost sharing

Salaries of faculty members and other personnel who will be working on the project may be requested in proportion to the effort they will devote to the project.

Current and Pending Support

The information in this section of the proposal provides reviewers with an opportunity to evaluate the contribution the proposed work will make to the investigators' overall research program.

The proposal must list any other current public or private research support (including in-house support) to principal investigator(s) listed on the Application for Funding Cover Page, whether or not salary support for the person(s) involved is included in the budget. The FANRP must be informed of changes in pending grant support that arise after the proposal has been submitted. Nonflexible funds--including principal investigator and support staff salaries, overhead expenses, and office space--may be excluded when these funds are received through a noncompetitive process. Analogous information must be provided for any pending proposals, including this proposal, that are now being considered by, or that will be submitted in the near future to, other possible sponsors, including other USDA programs or agencies. Note that this proposal must be listed as Pending. In addition to completing the information, investigators also should include a brief statement of research objectives or project summaries for all projects listed in Current and Pending Support (excluding formula funding and intramural support). Concurrent submission of identical or similar proposals to other possible sponsors will not prejudice proposal review or evaluation by the Program Manager or experts engaged by the Program Manager for this purpose. However, a proposal that duplicates or overlaps substantially with a proposal already reviewed and funded (or that will be funded) by FANRP will not be funded under this program.

Please include the following information under the heading Current and Pending Support. Items to include:

- ▶ Record information for active and pending projects in two sections by name, supporting agency, total funding amount, effective and expiration dates, percentage of time committed and title of project.
- ▶ All current research to which principal investigator(s) and other senior personnel have committed a portion of their time must be listed, whether or not salary for the person involved is included in the budgets of the various projects.

Additions to Project Description

Each project description is expected to be complete without the need to refer to additional materials. However, additions to the Project Description (appendices) are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed research and are strictly limited to a total of two pages. This total may include reprints (papers that have been published in peer-reviewed journals) or

preprints (manuscripts in press for a peer-reviewed journal must be accompanied by letter of acceptance from the publishing journal).

Manuscripts sent in support of the proposal should be single-spaced and printed on both sides of the page. Each manuscript must be identified with the name of the submitting organization, the name(s) of the principal investigator(s), and the title of the proposal, and be securely attached to each copy of the proposal. Staff of the FANRP will not collate applicant proposals or proposal addenda.

Information may not be appended to a proposal to circumvent page limitations prescribed for the project description. Extraneous materials will not be used during the review process.

What/Where To Submit

An original and 10 copies of the application are required. Due to the volume of proposals that are expected and the difficulty in identifying proposals submitted in several packages, all copies of each proposal must be mailed in a single package. In addition, please ensure that each copy of the proposal is stapled securely in the upper left-hand corner. DO NOT BIND any of the copies of the proposal, as it will only delay processing.

Every effort should be made to ensure that the proposal contains all pertinent information when originally submitted. Prior to mailing, it is urged that the proposal be compared with the checklist at the back cover of this document.

To ensure prompt receipt of submitted proposals, use First Class or Express mail, or a courier service. To be considered for funding this fiscal year, proposals (an original and 10 copies) must be transmitted by the relevant date indicated in the FANRP Program Description (as indicated by postmark or date on courier bill of lading). Late proposals will not be considered. Electronic or fax submissions will not be accepted.

Address for Submitting Proposals:

Economic Research Service
FANRP
1800 M Street, NW, Room 2141
Washington DC 20036-5831
Telephone: (202) 694-5400
Fax: (202) 694-5661
E-mail: lesleel@econ.ag.gov

Proposal Disposition

When each peer review evaluation is completed, the responsible program staff of the FANRP

will recommend that the project (a) be approved for support from currently available funds or (b) be declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

The FANRP reserves the right to negotiate with the principal investigator or project director and/or with the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions (for example, reductions in the scope of work), funding level, or period or method of support prior to recommending any project for funding.

A proposal may be withdrawn at any time before a final funding decision is made regarding the proposal; however, withdrawn proposals normally will not be returned. One copy of each proposal that is not selected for funding (including those that are withdrawn) will be retained by the FANRP for a period of 1 year. The remaining copies will be destroyed.

Duration of Awards

Within the limit of available funds, the awarding official shall make grants and cooperative agreements to those responsible, eligible applicants whose proposals are judged most meritorious in the announced program areas under the evaluation criteria and procedures set forth. The total period for which a grant or cooperative agreement is awarded (including all funded and unfunded time extensions) may not exceed 5 years.

Management Information

Specific management and organizational information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one-time basis prior to the award of a competitive grant and/or cooperative agreement. Copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling the requirements will be provided by the FANRP Office once a grant or cooperative agreement has been recommended for funding.

Notice of Award

A competitive grant or cooperative agreement award document, containing the budget, terms and conditions of the award, and other necessary information, will be prepared and forwarded to each grantee or cooperator, along with a Notice of Competitive Grant or Cooperative Agreement Award, by the Administrative and Financial Management Division, ARS, USDA.

Financial Obligations

For any competitive grant or cooperative agreement awarded, the maximum financial obligation of ERS shall be the amount of funds authorized for the award. This amount will be stated on the award instrument and on the approved budget. However, in the event an erroneous amount is stated on the grant award instrument, the approved budget, or any supporting document, ERS reserves the unilateral right to make the correction and to make an appropriate adjustment in the amount of the award to align with the authorized amount.

Nothing in these guidelines or any program announcement shall obligate ERS, the Department, or the United States to take favorable action on any application received in response to any announcement, or to support any project at a particular level. Further, neither the approval of any application nor the award of any project grant or cooperative agreement shall commit or obligate the United States in any way to make any renewal, supplemental, continuation, or other award with respect to any approved application or portion of an approved application.

Post Award Administration

Awardees will be required to ensure that all funds are expended in accordance with the terms and conditions of grant or cooperative agreement award, Departmental regulations, and the applicable Federal cost principles in effect on the date of the award. Responsibility for the use and expenditure of grant or cooperative agreement funds may not be transferred or delegated in whole or in part to another party (even if a grantee enters into a contractual relationship with that party), unless the grant itself is transferred in whole or in part to another party by ERS.

Authorization to make changes in approved project plans, budget, period of support, etc., will be governed largely by the terms and conditions of the competitive grant award or cooperative agreement. Among other things, these terms and conditions will set forth the kinds of post-award changes that may be made by the awardee and the kinds of changes that are reserved to the FANRP Office. It is urged that all key project personnel and authorized organizational representatives read them carefully.

Release of Information

ERS receives grant and cooperative agreement proposals in confidence and will protect the confidentiality of their contents to the extent permitted by law. When a proposal results in a grant or cooperative agreement, however, it becomes part of the public record and is available to the public upon written request. Copies of proposals (including excerpts from proposals) that are not funded will not be released. Information regarding funded projects will be made available to the extent permitted under the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, and implementing USDA regulations.

Requests to obtain authorized information (and fee schedule relating to the handling of this information), or to obtain information regarding procedures related to release of grantor cooperative agreement information should be directed to the National Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Coordinator, ARS Information Staff, 6303 Ivy Lane, Room 406, Greenbelt, MD 20770; telephone (301) 344-2207.

Checklist

All proposals submitted under the FANRP must contain the applicable elements outlined in these guidelines. The following checklist has been prepared to assist in ensuring that the proposal is

complete and in the proper order prior to mailing:

- Application for Funding Cover Page
 - ▶ Is all required information accurate and complete?
 - ▶ Have all principal investigators and the authorized organizational representative (when required) signed the form?
 - ▶ Does one copy contain pen-and-ink signatures?
 - ▶ Have you included a telephone number where a message may be left for you?
- Table of Contents
 - ▶ Are page numbers included for each item?
- Project Summary
 - ▶ Has the Project Summary been included, using the form located in the back of this document?
 - ▶ Do the name and institution of all investigators appear on the page, or on the following page?
 - ▶ Does it include research objectives?
 - ▶ Is it 250 words?
- Project Description
 - ▶ Is the project fully described?
 - ▶ Does this section adhere to the format and page limitations, as specified?
 - ▶ Does this section begin as page 1, as specified?
- References to Project Description
 - ▶ Are all references cited?
 - ▶ Are all citations referenced?
 - ▶ Do all citations contain a title and are they in accepted journal format?
- Documentation from Collaborator(s), or Host Institution (where appropriate)
- Vitae and Publication List(s)
 - ▶ Are vitae included for all investigators, senior associates, and other key project personnel (including subcontractors--see instructions)?
 - ▶ Is the vitae current and pertinent?
 - ▶ Is the publication list complete and limited to the last 5 years?

Budget (form ARS-455)

- ▶ Are budget items complete?
- ▶ Is summary budget included?

■ General

- ▶ Does the proposal conform to all format and page limitations and deadline requirements?
- ▶ Are there an original and 10 copies?
- ▶ Are all copies complete?

ERS Deadline Dates

The following fixed dates have been established for proposal submission deadlines within the FANRP. To be considered for funding in fiscal year 1998, proposals must be received by the date listed below (as indicated by postmark or date on courier bill of lading).

Postmarked Dates	Program Areas
June 1, 1998	Food Program Targeting and Delivery Success at servicing needy at-risk populations Program gaps and overlays Urban-rural delivery Waste, fraud, and abuse
June 3, 1998	Dietary and Nutrition Outcomes Access to and choice of healthful diets Nutrition and health
June 5, 1998	Program Forecasting and Budget Analysis Economic growth, recession, inflation Program interactions Projections of budgetary needs Programs and local economic conditions